



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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Lebanon: Further support of €58 million to deal with Syria crisis

The European Commission has adopted new funding today for a total of €58 million in support of Lebanon. The objective of this newly adopted assistance is to alleviate the impact of the high influx of refugees from Syria. It will address medium and longer-term needs of refugees from Syria and Lebanese host communities alike; in particular through supporting childhood and education services and through enhancing basic infrastructure and economic recovery in the country. This support includes funds from the recently announced comprehensive assistance package which mobilises an additional €400 million for the consequences of the Syrian crisis.

"As I underlined in Vilnius at the informal meeting of Foreign Ministers this weekend, the EU is committed to a political solution that will result in a united, inclusive and democratic Syria. At the same time, the EU will continue to uphold its commitment, as the largest donor, to provide aid and assistance to those in need due to the Syrian conflict. Today's special measure in favour of Lebanon is part of this effort", High Representative-Vice President of the Commission Catherine Ashton said.

Commissioner responsible for the EU Neighbourhood Policy Štefan Füle, said: "This new support is part of our comprehensive response to pressing needs in Lebanon caused by the crisis in Syria. We will continue supporting our partners during this difficult time. Refugee children are particularly affected by the crisis. By ensuring that they can attend schools and kindergartens, together with their Lebanese neighbours, we are trying to return a bit of normality in children's daily lives."

The majority of these funds (€40 million) will be implemented mainly through UN agencies (e.g. UNHCR, UNICEF and UNRWA) and aim at improving:

- pre-school care for Syrian and Lebanese children;
- access to quality education for Syrian and Lebanese school-age children; and
- learning opportunities for adolescents and youth.

The other part (€18 million) will finance initiatives benefitting mainly Lebanese host communities such as:

- improving local basic infrastructure (water supply, sanitation, solid waste management) and;
- supporting the local economy, income generating initiatives, job creation and intensive social support (conflict prevention, support to vulnerable people).

Today's announcement of the additional €58 million constitutes a further significant increase to the financial assistance allocated by the European Commission to Lebanon in relation to the Syrian crisis. It brings the total amount provided in humanitarian and non-humanitarian assistance to €235 million.

Background

The EU – its Institutions and its Member States - is the biggest donor of assistance in response to the Syrian crisis both in Syria and in neighbouring countries.

Today's commitment forms part of the concrete actions foreseen in the Commission's recent Joint communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions "Towards a comprehensive EU approach to the Syrian crisis" dated 24 June 2013. This assistance package is an important contribution from the EU to address the humanitarian crisis in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon with €250 million and to link this relief with development and stabilisation by additional €150 million. Out of the €150 million funding for development needs, €40 million will deal with the Syrian crisis in Lebanon (part of the funding announced today), €60 million – for Jordan and €50 million – for Syria.

While being the smallest of Syria's neighbouring countries, Lebanon hosts the highest number of refugees from Syria. By September 2013 more than 720 000 Syrian refugees had registered or were awaiting registration with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Lebanon. In addition, approximately 85 000 Palestine refugees from Syria have been recorded by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in Lebanon¹, and around 49 000 'Lebanese returnees' are expected to be in Lebanon by the end of 2013². As some refugees are hesitant to register and others still rely on own resources, the actual number of Syrian refugees is certainly higher³. The numbers of refugees coming from Syria are expected to continue to rise: already in June the UNHCR and the Lebanese Government forecasted 1 000 000 refugees in need of assistance (i.e. registered with UNHCR) by the end of 2013. Meanwhile, UNRWA's initial estimate of 80 000 Palestinian refugees from Syria for the same timeframe was reached already after 7 months.

For more information

Website of the DG Development and Cooperation - EuropeAid:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_en.htm

Website of EU Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Štefan Füle:

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/fule/index_en.htm

EU Delegation to Lebanon:

http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/lebanon/index_en.htm

¹ Being Palestinian, these refugees fall under the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and not UNHCR.

² ECHO SitRep 22. "Lebanese returnees" are individuals who formally are Lebanese but who lived their lives in Syria often for decades. They have fled Lebanon under conditions similar to those of Syrian refugees but fall outside the mandate of the UNHCR as they are formally nationals of the host country and therefore by definition not refugees.

³ According to Government of Lebanon figures, there is already more than 1 000 000 Syrians in Lebanon including refugees in need of assistance, refugees depending on own resources and a large number of Syrian workers already present in Lebanon prior to the conflict.

On the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI):

<http://www.enpi-info.eu/indexmed.php>

Contacts :

[Peter Stano](#) (+32 2 295 74 84)

[Anca Paduraru](#) (+32 2 296 64 30)

[Michael Mann](#) (+32 2 299 97 80)

[Sebastien Brabant](#) (+32 2 298 64 33)

[Nabila Massrali](#) (+32 2 296 92 18)